

## **Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes**

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on April 14, 2010.

### **Members Present:**

Douglas Brimhall      Kit Filbey  
Peter G. Cook        Dr. D. Kent Layton  
Vincent P. DiBella    Lars Nielson, Jr.  
Keiko Dilbeck

### **Members Absent:**

Amanda Buscas  
Rebecca Nolan  
Dr. Robbi Venditti  
Pamela Williams

### **Staff Present:**

Kari Kent              Rob Schultz  
Sunnee Spencer      Jean Kaminski

### **Guests Present:**

Merlin Ellis          Natalie Lewis  
Jodi Sorrell          Shea Joachim  
Mark Soronson

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, called for any corrections/deletions/additions to the minutes from March 10. There being none, Kit Filbey made a motion, Vince DiBella seconded, and the Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of March 10. They will be posted on the City's Webpage.

### **Items from Citizens Present:**

Merlin Ellis was present to listen and observe. He is interested in arts and culture and interested in becoming involved in the community.

### **Introduction of New Board Member Pamela Williams – Douglas Brimhall**

Pamela Williams was absent due to a business meeting.

### **Present Information and Discuss – Update on the Central Mesa Light Rail Extension – Jodi Sorrell**

Jodi Sorrell, Transportation Planning and Transit; Shea Joachim, Economic Development; and Mark Soronson, a consultant working on behalf of METRO on the Light Rail project, presented an update of the Central Mesa Light Rail Extension (Exhibit A).

Jodi Sorrell stated that last year City Council adopted extending Light Rail on Main Street. The past seven months have been spent working with community members to identify station locations and street configurations along the alignment. The updated presentation is a result of those meetings and will be going back to Council for adoption of the recommendations.

Shea Joachim reminded the Board that he was at the March 10 Board meeting and spoke on the efforts that are currently underway as they relate to downtown economic development – one of those being Light Rail. He spoke on Council's Strategic Initiatives at the March meeting and focused on Economic Development and Regional Leadership (see below). He shared a slide that graphically showed the efforts currently underway for downtown Mesa that integrate Council's initiatives. Light Rail transit, while a very important project, is one piece of the puzzle. Staff is looking to leverage many different economic efforts, including Light Rail, to maximize the economic development potential of the Main Street corridor, in particular, downtown Mesa.

Mark Soronson presented some history of the project. The project has been a three-year process and in May of 2009 City Council approved extending Light Rail on Main Street to Mesa Drive. There is an additional 1.8 mile extension to Gilbert Road that Council has approved, but there is no funding at this time. The current Light Rail station at Sycamore has been the most popular and highest boarding station on the original 20 mile rail. Currently, the project team is in the process of completing the Design Elements Definition and the Environmental Assessment. Construction is scheduled to begin late 2012 or early 2013 with the opening of the 3.1 mile extension scheduled for 2016. After Council's approval, began an extensive process with a committee that consisted of 40 plus business and property owners and chaired by the Vice Mayor who worked through issues relating to configuring downtown and station locations. Work began in October of 2009 and the last meeting was last week, April 2010. Recommendations from the committee will be presented to Council as part of the public process.

Elements that were looked at are: traffic lane configuration in downtown Mesa; on-street parking; bicycle facilities; street lighting and OCS; left turn requirements; pedestrian access points; station design; urban design/public art; and construction staging.

Station locations being recommended are: west of Alma School, east of Country Club Drive, east of Center Street, and east of Mesa Drive. From Sycamore to Country Club it was decided there would be two traffic lanes in each direction, separate left turn lanes with dedicated arrows at intersections, and the on-street parking would be removed. From Country Club to Mesa Drive there would be one traffic lane in each direction, separate left turn lanes with dedicated arrows at intersections, and on-street parking would be maintained where possible.

As far as park-and-ride is concerned, they are in the process of assessing the demand at Mesa Drive; final configuration has not been determined. There will also be three sites for buildings that supply power to vehicles and systems. They are placed at one-mile intervals near the tracks; typically 20' x 40' x 12' high.

Ridership – The Mesa extension is performing well regarding ridership; Sycamore station is the highest boarding station in the current system. The preliminary cost estimate is approximately \$200 million; 60 percent (%) coming from Federal funding and 40% from regional proposition 400 funds.

Funding – The preliminary cost estimate is approximately \$200 million; 60 percent (%) coming from Federal funding and 40% from regional proposition 400 funds.

Peter Cook asked if there were any numbers as to how much the traffic/boarding would drop off at Sycamore once the extension is complete. Mr. Soronson replied that they have been looking at that question and don't have a solid response at this time, but they are doing a license plate survey to see where the parkers are coming from and how many might move to a newer location.

Dr. Kent Layton asked if it was a unanimous vote from the committee on station location and traffic configuration. Jodi Sorrell responded that as far as station location goes, the committee was given a comment form that listed a number of locations for each station. There wasn't one selected that didn't have at least 70% in favor, most were 80 – 90% in favor. As far as traffic configuration, it was 100% in favor.

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, said that one of the main documents that came from that stakeholders committee is an Urban Designs Guideline document. The document lists performance standards relative to Public Art, sidewalk details, benches, etc. He continued that there is a standard look to each station, but each has been personalized for the location. He expressed an interest of having a presence on the committee that would be making decisions on the Public Art element of the Mesa stations, as one of the duties and responsibilities of the Board is to oversee Public Art in Mesa. Jodi Sorrell commented that one of the next steps is METRO is getting ready to issue a call to artists. The Public Art process has two levels: 1) a Regional Arts Rail Committee, which will have a couple of members added from Mesa for the Mesa stations; and 2) each station has a Station Area Review Committee (SARC), they are smaller committees and specific to the station; working with the artist for that specific station, and there will be three community members on that committee. Rob Schultz suggested that the Board invite MJ Finnerty, Public Art coordinator for METRO, to a meeting and learn what opportunities there may be to sit on a committee and how to go about applying to be on said committee.

### **Present Information and Discuss – Update on Council's Five "Strategic Initiatives" – Natalie Lewis**

Natalie Lewis presented City Council's five strategic initiatives (Exhibit B). Following each initiative are comments and/or suggestions from individual Councilmembers on how to achieve each initiative.

They are:

- 1) ***Economic Development*** – key words: innovative, development and business friendly, variety of strategic tools, redevelopment of older and vacant areas, and a focus on high-value job creation and employment.  
Comments from Councilmembers: look at zoning codes – form-based codes; look at way-finding; retaining the Chicago Cubs – important element for Mesa/Arizona; Mayor's HEAT initiating (Healthcare, Education, Aerospace, and Tourism) – engage more educational institutions with a presence in downtown; and bringing high-value jobs to the City.
- 2) ***Quality of Life*** – key words: safe and clean neighborhoods and parks, transportation options, cultural and arts amenities, excellent education opportunities, sustainability, and environmentally responsible.  
Comments from Councilmembers: invest in parks and recreation; strengthen library services; arts and culture support; re-emergence of community events; expand "green" initiatives; and work regionally to expand broadband and Wi-Fi access.
- 3) ***Community Engagement*** – key words: building pride and encourage civic leadership, involving neighborhoods, keeping non-profits and faith-based organizations involved, and communicating with the citizens.  
Comments from Councilmembers: Continue with and expand the variety of community conversations (i.e., Top2Bottom events, pancake breakfasts, Mayor's community conversations, etc.); continue programs to further neighborhood leadership and stabilization (such as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program); continue to support faith-based and non-profit agencies (i.e., prayer breakfasts, help secure grants, etc.).

- 4) **Financial Stability** – key words: ensure financial factors are being considered to achieve stable revenue as well as responsible budgeting.  
Comments from Councilmembers: expand “Shop Mesa” program; review mission of prior “Financing the Future Committee” and possibly revive; and launch a new financial system, “CityEdge Project,” to update City’s 30-year old budgeting system and create new efficiencies within the City.
- 5) **Regional Leadership** – key words: taking leadership responsibility, being available, and making Mesa more “on-the-map.”  
Comments from Councilmembers: Work regionally to retain the Chicago Cubs in Mesa; pursue a regional public transit plan; increase Mesa and Valley visibility; and work to regionally expand broadband and Wi-Fi access opportunities.

Peter Cook commented that what struck him was a sense of overlooking some of the problems that Mesa faces today; the particular item that hit him was a focus on high-value job creation. Mesa has a problem, he said, in that we do not have high-value jobs at this time, but casual labor. He didn’t see anything in the initiatives that addresses solving how to continue to get people access to the low cost labor, that is a benefit of living in this part of the country, and at the same time deal with the immigration problem and the new laws that are going to the state legislature. Ms. Lewis said that was not discussed at the last session, but she would take his comments to Council. Mr. Cook stated that he feels there needs to be recognition of the realistic aspects of our situation, as well as the higher level goals. Ms. Lewis replied that Council plans to come back together every year and discuss the initiatives and make changes as the economic climate and environmental changes occur.

### **Discussion and Information – Update on Letter Sent to the Mayor and Council – Douglas Brimhall**

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, shared the response he received from the Mayor to the Board’s letter; it read: “Thank you for the letter requesting funding for the establishment of an Arts Impact Award. I appreciate the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board members taking the time to share their thoughts and comments with me. Please know that the Mesa City Council and I will consider this request during our upcoming budget discussions.” The Board expressed their appreciation for the response. The Mayor had asked staff what an Arts Impact Award is. No one has actually defined what an Arts Impact Award would be at this time, but the Board would like to create something that would show their support to the local arts organizations in place of the Arts and Cultural Grants and Mini Grants that no longer exist. After some discussion and no conclusion, it was decided that an ad-hoc committee would create a draft of several ideas of what an Arts Impact Award could be. Kit Filbey and Douglas Brimhall agreed to be on the ad-hoc committee. It was suggested that Rebecca Nolan and Amanda Buscas would have an interest in being part of the ad-hoc committee as well, but they were both absent due to illness. Mr. Brimhall will contact them to see if they would agree to be on the committee. The ad-hoc committee will bring their draft to the May 12 Board meeting.

### **Present Information and Provide Direction – Discuss a date and time for a Board Retreat and Strategies for Upcoming Year – Douglas Brimhall**

It was agreed that having a Board Retreat would be shelved until the new Arts and Cultural Director is here and has had a chance to settle in. It was also agreed that the first strategic initiative of the Board, at this time, is to define what an Arts Impact Award would be.

### **Staff Reports**

#### Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer

- Since “Play Ball” opened, the Museum has had 4,181 people on site; March has seen 5,544 to date. This is close to double the visitors at this time last year. The Museum has been collecting surveys at the front desk and has found that approximately 15% of the visitors came for “Play Ball.”
- Last year, the Museum saw a dip in numbers due to the exhibit “Recycled Into Art” being extended due to budget cuts, although, the Museum had the popular Dominic Benhura exhibition, “African Stone Sculpture” last spring.
- In the past nine months, volunteers have contributed 3,883 hours of service at a value of \$81,964. Volunteers will be recognized on Monday at City Council and the Museum’s Fred Nardacchia has been selected to be one of three who will present a symbolic check to Council.
- Submitted a grant to the Arizona Commission on the Arts for FY10-11.
- Participated in the Blues, Baseball, and Balderdash on March 12 and 13 by remaining open in the evening; the evening was not a great success for the Museum – low attendance, but they will continue to participate in such events.
- Received a \$10,000 grant from Boeing.
- Received \$5,000 from the *Arizona Republic* for the “NASA” exhibition for media sponsorship.
- Opening “Sounds Like Art” exhibition, a visual expression of music, next Thursday, April 22.
- Expanding Art Zone; renovation moving along well. Come see on May 1!
- ArtVille will be closed on April 26, 27, and 28 to change content and add items to the area.

- "Play Ball" saw the first ever cell phone tour at the Museum; 94 people participated in the tour.
- Staff is back in their offices after renovation.

#### Arizona Museum of Natural History – Rob Schultz reported for Tom Wilson

- The Museum's first fundraiser, Arizona Adventure, held on March 6, was a great success.
- Mesa Grande had an open house and the grand opening of the interruptive trail on Saturday, March 27. It was a great event with 700 visitors that included Representative Harry Mitchell.
- Revenue was up by .05%, and attendance was up by 14% in March, compared to last year.

#### **Acting Director's Report – Rob Schultz, Assistant Arts and Cultural Director, Reported for Kari Kent**

The Arts and Cultural Department will present the budget to City Council on Thursday, April 22. Board members are welcome to come and listen if they like. The Study Session begins at 7:30 a.m. The City Manager has directed staff to present a proposal with a 7 percent (%) cut to the Department. A 7% cut won't be easy and means the Department will lose 3.5 staff positions. 7% equates to approximately \$710,000 and that will cause some constriction and contraction of programs.

The City has hired the next Arts and Cultural Director, Cindy Ornstein. Ms. Ornstein comes to Mesa from Flint, Michigan where she currently is the principal manager of the 33-acre Flint Cultural Center Corporation. Her duties include supervising and guiding the directors of the Center which includes a 2,000 seat auditorium, a history museum and automotive gallery, and a planetarium with an extensive science education program. She comes to Mesa with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the arts and cultural field. Her first day will be July 6; however, she will arrive in time to attend the City's Freedom Festival on July 4.

#### **Report on Conferences and/or Meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information Only**

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, reported for Dr. Robbi Venditti, who was unable to attend the meeting, that she attended the open house for Mesa Grande on Saturday, March 27, and was impressed with the site. Mr. Brimhall attended as well and stated how impressive the mound is up close.

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, also said he attended the meet and greet last Thursday evening for Cindy Ornstein. He feels she will be a good fit for the Arts and Cultural Department and the community. While at the meet and greet in Mesa Contemporary Art's courtyard, he also saw the Chris Mars exhibition and found the exhibit extremely interesting and different.

Keiko Dilbeck said she also attended the open house for Mesa Grande. She said she grew up around the site area and had never known much about it. She found the interruptive trail very informative and interesting. Rob Schultz commented that this is the first step of many phases for the trail. Keiko also commented that the volunteers who were working were extremely knowledgeable, helpful, and friendly, making the experience one she will remember.

Peter Cook reported that he attended Southwest Shakespeare's "Blithe Spirit" and loved it.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kari Kent, Acting Director  
Arts and Cultural Department

## Central Mesa Light Rail Transit Extension

### Museum and Cultural Advisory Board Project Update

April 14, 2010

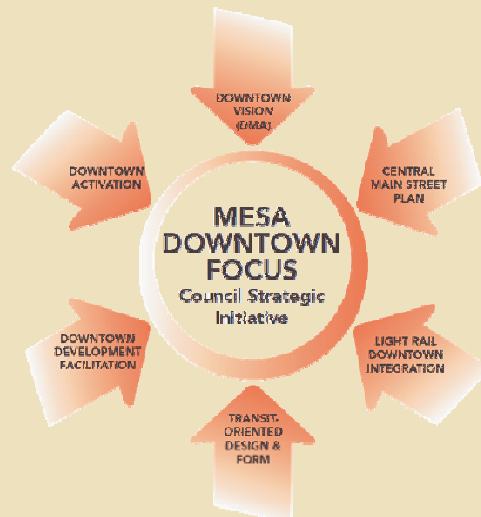


## City Council Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development
- Community Engagement
- Quality of Life
- Regional Leadership
- Financial Stability



## Downtown Focus



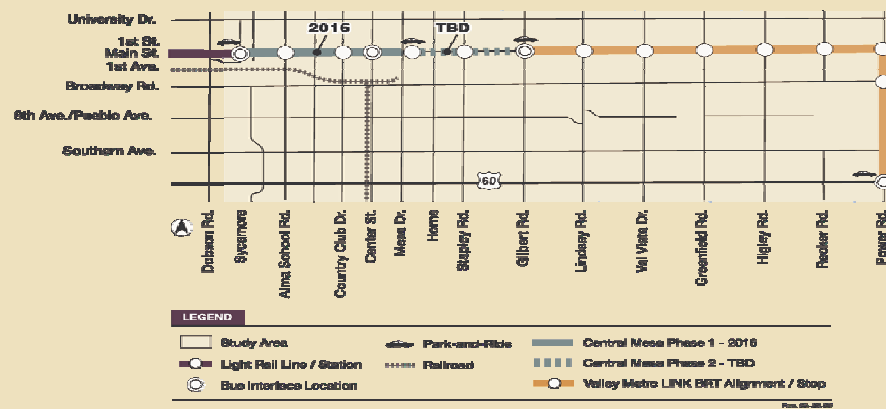


## High Capacity Transit Alternatives Analysis

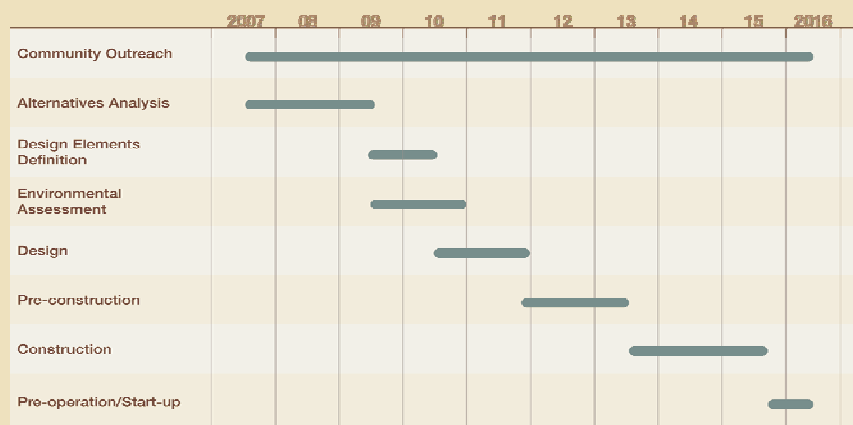
- Two-year process (2007-2009)
- Purpose to identify alignment and technology
- Project team evaluation included:
  - Rider benefits
  - Cost
  - Traffic
  - Design & constructability
- **Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)**
  - Adopted by Mesa City Council in May 2009



## Locally Preferred Alternative



## Central Mesa Project Schedule

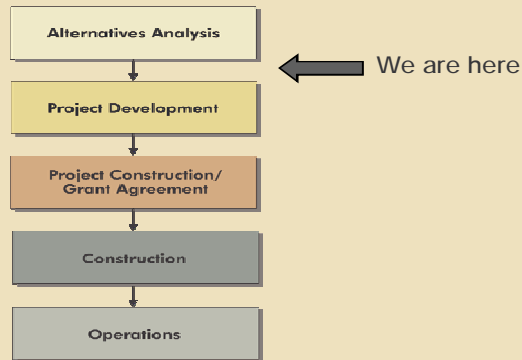


All dates reflect the year the activity is expected to begin.





## Federal Small Starts Process



## Design Elements

- Technical analysis
- Stakeholder Advisory Committee
  - Ad hoc committee
  - Comprised of businesses & property owners
  - Oct 2009 – April 2010
  - Chaired by the city of Mesa , Vice Mayor
- Community input



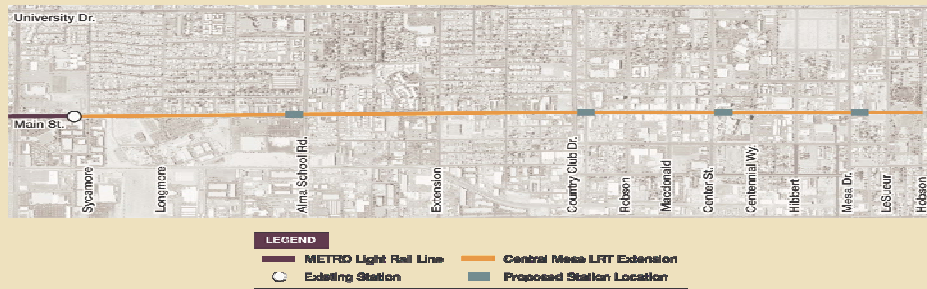
## Community Design Elements

- Traffic lane configuration in downtown Mesa
- On-Street parking
- Bicycle facilities
- Street lighting and OCS
- Left turn requirements
- Pedestrian access points
- Station design
- Urban design/public art
- Construction staging





## Station Locations



## West of Alma School Road



## East of Country Club Drive







## East of Center Street

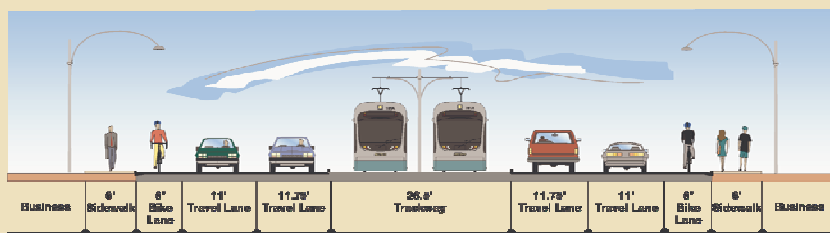


## East of Mesa Drive



## Sycamore to Country Club

- Two traffic lanes in each direction
- Intersections – separate left turn lanes, dedicated arrows
- On-street parking removed



- Currently assessing demand at Mesa Drive
- Located east of Mesa Drive
- Final configuration has not been determined



- Supply power to vehicles & systems
- Placed at one-mile intervals near tracks
- Typical dimensions: 20' x 40' x 12' high
- 3 site locations will be recommended during design



- Projected ridership
  - Average weekday ridership = 4,750
- Preliminary Cost Estimate
  - \$198 million
  - 40% Regional Proposition 400 funds
  - 60% Federal funding





## Public Involvement

- Office hours- 18 W. Main Street
- E-Newsletter
- Presentations
- Events
- Mailing list
- Website – Mesa Now & METRO



## Current Activities

- Federal environmental documentation
  - Environmental assessment
  - DRAFT August 2009 – Spring 2010
  - FINAL Summer 2010 – Fall 2010
- Initiate Small Starts Project Development (design)
  - Application submitted to FTA – November 2009
  - FTA approval – Spring 2010
- Central Mesa Light Rail Stakeholder Advisory Committee
  - Work with stakeholders to define criteria for downtown urban design elements
  - October 2009 – April 2010
- On-going public outreach



## Next Steps

- Upcoming Presentations – April & May 2010
  - Open house
    - Saturday, April 24 – 9 to noon
    - 18 W. Main Street
  - City of Mesa Advisory Boards & Committees
  - Community Groups
  - City Council
- Draft Environmental Assessment – late Spring 2010
- Preliminary Engineering – Summer 2010



## Contacts

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## **Focus on Mesa: Council Strategic Initiatives**

2010/2011



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** that is innovative, development and business-friendly and that includes a variety of strategic tools, redevelopment of older and vacant areas, and a focus on high-value job creation and employment.



**QUALITY OF LIFE** for citizens of Mesa that includes safe and clean neighborhoods and parks, transportation options, cultural and arts amenities, and excellent educational opportunities; all of which should be sustainable and environmentally responsible.



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** to build pride in our City and to encourage a wide range of civic leadership. This includes the involvement of neighborhoods, non-profit and faith-based organizations and direct communication with citizens.



**FINANCIAL STABILITY** that provides proactive leadership and that considers all financial factors in order to achieve stable revenues, responsible budgeting and organizational efficiencies.



**REGIONAL LEADERSHIP** that acknowledges that Mesa's and the region's well being are intertwined and recognizes Mesa's responsibility to be a leader of and an active participant in working with regional partners to find shared solutions to regional challenges that are innovative and sustainable.